

The Oasis

Saturday Oct. 10, 1903.

SAN FRANCISCO.

The Annual Big Fiesta Held in His Honor at Magdalena is Attended By a Large Crowd From Nogales.

Last evening, the big Fiesta at Magdalena, Sonora, which has been the all important attraction to the natives of our sister republic across the border for the last nine days, was brought to a close, and the thousands of pilgrims and sightseers who were in attendance thereupon are now returning to their homes in different parts of country.

San Francisco Javier is one of the most celebrated and revered of all the Catholic saints, and every year a big celebration is held at Magdalena, of which town San Francisco is the patron saint, to do honor to him and made good the many vows and promises made to him by the faithful during the previous year for favors and graces granted them according to their faith, in times of trouble and despair. In many generations every household in this region, has at one time or another, had occasion to call on San Francisco for special favors in case of sickness, accidents and misfortune of any description befalling on the family, offering in return for such favors, if granted, to make a special pilgrimage to Magdalena to do honor to that special image of the saint in the church in that town, besides reciting special prayers, a novena, and doing acts of penance, such as traveling on their knees for some distance when they make their visit to his image, wearing a Franciscan habit, giving alms, etc.

The celebration this year began on the first of the month and the worshipping penitents traveled for hundreds of miles, from all over Sonora, Sinaloa, Lower California and from different points in this country to visit the image of the saint. They came singly and in groups, by foot, horseback, burro, wagon and by almost every other conceivable kind of conveyance, except automobiles, which were quite conspicuous by their absence.

They seemed to have brought their entire personal belongings along with them, and camped right out in the streets, and were as much at home there as out in the interior. Magdalena has a normal population of about 2,5000 souls, and the great influx of fifteen thousand visitors naturally crowded things a little, and breathing space was at a premium and hard to find at that. Last Sunday, October the fourth, was the big day, being San Francisco's own day, and a large number of the residents of Nogales took advantage of the excursion rates and two trainloads of people went from here that morning to attend the notable event. The old mission of Magdalena, which possesses considerable historic interest being several hundred years old, was opened at sunrise that morning and was kept open until late at night, allowing the thousands of penitents to pay homage and devotion to the saint, whose image in the shape of a wooden effigy was exposed to view, lying upon a bier in the front part of the church. The pilgrims packed the church all day long, bringing with them laces, ribbons and articles of clothing to be given to the attendants in charge to be placed for a

moment upon the figure of the saint; this act protecting the wearer from sickness and misfortunes for an entire year, or until the next Fiesta.

They all brought their thank offerings for the saint and were allowed to kiss his newly painted toes, the performance of which act is supposed to bring special grace to the kissers. The most devout of the worshippers entered the church upon their knees carrying lighted wax candles, and, with tear-streaming faces proceeded in that manner to the image of San Francisco where they prostrated themselves before him and presented the candles as additional thank offerings.

The priests also did a thriving business in baptizing the hundreds of infants which were brought by adoring mothers for that purpose and to be named after the saint. The streets adjacent to the church were all lined with booths where different religious articles, such as rosaries, prayer books, portraits of San Francisco and others were sold. Right in front of the church was a cart from which pulque, the Mexican national drink was dispensed. One of the main features was the religious hypnotic dance by five brave Yaqui warriors and a squaw which attracted quite a crowd of interested sightseers.

The Fiesta proper was held at some little distance from the church and those who were fortunate enough to be in possession of any money after leaving the good saint hied themselves to that quarter of the town where were conducted all conceivable games of chances and they got a run for their money at any kind that they were looking for. The big merry-go-round was one of the principal attractions of the big show and was the marvel of all the natives who live out in the interior, and by the way the owner raked in the shekels, that proposition must be better than any known gold mine.

In the afternoon at three o'clock, the Nogales Diamond N's crossed bats with the Magdalena team and a very interesting ball game resulted which was a hard fought battle, being finally won by the Nogales boys with a score of thirteen to eight. The exhibition of the Yaqui fireworks at night was a very excellent one and was the admiration of all the Americans present who marvelled at their skill in that line.

After the fireworks were over, a special train was in waiting at the station, which left for Nogales at midnight, bringing home most of the sightseers from their day's outing. A slight accident happened to the train at Quijano; a horse which was on the tracks being killed, throwing the front wheels of the engine off the tracks and delaying the train about an hour, and the party arrived here at four o'clock Monday morning, hungry and "muy cansado."

WAYSIDE NOTES.

Continued from page 1.

is included in the holdings of the Minnesota & Mexican Mining and Development Company. Some two leagues away are the Marquesa properties, owned by the same gentlemen. They can be reached more easily from the main road to Batuc, and I shall turn aside to reach them, while en route tomorrow. Our return from the Quincy mines was without incident or accident, and we are now preparing to go to Batuc, and Suaqui de Batuc tomorrow. From there will come the next batch of Wayside notes.

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